

YAMA AND NIYAMA

INTRODUCTION

Morality is the foundation of Sádhaná (spiritual practice). It must, however, be remembered that morality or good conduct is not the culminating point of the spiritual march. As a moralist one may set an ideal for other moralists, but to do this is not something worth mentioning for a Sádhaka (spiritual aspirant). Sádhaná, in its very start, requires mental equilibrium. This sort of mental harmony may also be termed as morality.

People often say, “I follow neither a religion nor rituals; I abide by truth; I harm nobody and I tell no lies. This is all that is necessary; nothing more need be done or learnt.” It should be clearly understood that morality is only an effort to lead a well-knit life. It will be more correct to define morality as a dynamic force rather than a static one, because balance in the extroversial spheres of life is maintained by waging a pauseless war against all opposite ideas. It is not an intro-external equilibrium. If the unbalanced state of mind takes a serious turn by pressure of external allurements, and if the mental disturbance is found to be intense, it is likely that the power for internal struggle may yield and consequently the external equilibrium, the show of morality, may at any moment break down.

That is why morality is, no doubt, not the goal, not even a static force. The morality of a moralist may disappear at any moment. It cannot be said with any certainty that the moralist who has resisted the temptation of a bribe of two rupees would also be able to resist the temptation of an offer of two hundred thousand rupees. Nevertheless, morality is not absolutely valueless in human life. Morality is an attribute of a good citizen and it is the starting point on the path of Sádhaná.

Moral ideals must be able to furnish human beings with the ability as well as the inspiration to proceed on the path of Sádhaná. Morality depends on one's efforts to maintain a balance regarding time, place and person and therefore there may be differences in moral code. But the ultimate end of moralism is the attainment of Supreme bliss and therefore there should not be any possibility of any imperfections of relativity. It cannot be said that the ultimate aim of human life is not to commit theft; what is desirable is that the tendency to commit theft should be eliminated. Not to indulge in falsehood is not the aim of life; what is important is that the tendency of telling lies should be dispelled from one's mind. The Sádhaka starts spiritual practices with the principles of morality, of not indulging in theft or falsehood. The aim of such morality is attainment of such a state of Oneness with Brahma where no desire is left for theft; and all tendencies of falsehood disappear.

In the path of Sádhaná, moral education is imparted with this ideal of oneness with Brahma, because Sádhaná is not possible without such a moral ideation. Sádhaná devoid of morality will divert people again towards material enjoyments and at any moment they may use their mental power, acquired with much hardship, to quench their thirst for meagre physical objects. There are many who have fallen from the path of Yoga or Tantra Sádhaná and are spending their days in disrepute and infamy. Whatever

little progress they achieved through forcible control of their instincts, was lost in a moment's error in pursuit of mundane pleasures.

It must, therefore, be emphasized that even before beginning Sádhaná, one must follow moral principles strictly. Those who do not follow these principles should not follow the path of Sádhaná; otherwise they will bring about their own harm and that of others. People of over-selfish nature fear the path of Sádhaná itself for fear of following its strict moral principles. They are concerned that the spread of spiritual ideals may inconvenience the fulfilment of their mean, selfish desires and therefore, they malign the path of Sádhaná in an effort to conceal their own weakness and dishonesty. But remember that those who are lacking in moral spirit do not deserve to be called human beings. However hard they may try, their tall talk alone cannot camouflage the meanness of their minds for a long time.

YAMA SÁDHANÁ

The first lesson of human conduct is Yama Sádhaná. We shall discuss all the aspects of Yama Sádhaná. You know that Yama consists of five principles – Ahimsá, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha.

Ahimsásatyásteyabrahmacaryáparigraháh yamah

The practice of these five principles achieves control by different processes. The word Sańyama in Sańskṛta means “regulated conduct”. It should be clearly understood that Sańyama does not imply destroying something or somebody.

AHIMSÁ

Manovákkáyaeh sarvabhútánámapiidánamahimsá.

Ahimsá means not inflicting pain or hurt on anybody by thought, word or action. This word is wrongly interpreted by many. Some so-called learned persons in fact, define the word ahimsá in such a manner that if one adheres to it strictly, it is impossible to live not only in a society but also in forests, hills and caves. In such an interpretation of the term ahimsá, not only is killing prohibited, but even to fight a defensive fight is not allowed. By tilling the land one may cause the death of innumerable insects and creatures under the earth's surface. Therefore, the use of a plough is not permissible. The followers of such an interpretation of ahimsá say that those who want to lead a religious life should not use the plough themselves, but employ other low-born people to do the same to save themselves from the sin of destroying life. Sugar must be poured into the abodes of the ants; no matter whether human beings have food or not. The poor must spare their blood from their bodies to save insects, the born enemies of human beings.

This is no definition of ahimsá. It merely causes confusion. It is contrary to true dharma; it is against the very laws of existence. Even the process of respiration involves the death of numberless microbes. They are all living beings and to save them one will have to stop breathing. The administration of medicines to the suffering will have to be stopped, because such medicines cause the destruction of disease-causing bacteria. If ahimsá is so interpreted, where will such interpreters be able to stand? They will have to give up even filtered water, because the process of filtration of water means destroying the insects that cause impurity. It is also not possible to drink impure water, because then it is likely that such microbes might die in the stomach.

In the post-Vedic age this type of ahimsá was practised in India for a long period, and as a result life for ordinary citizens became very miserable. The populace viewed with fear the religion dominated by this so-called ahimsá. They were forced to accept an atheistic belief, and they left the path of dharma. Devoid of any code of conduct, and intent on giving first preference to their own selfishness, such atheists became a burden to the society and to the world. Those who wanted to enforce the so-called ahimsá-influenced religion, became impractical and impotent by nature. Thus there is a pressing need in the modern age to re-think these historical facts from a new angle of vision.

This age was followed by another wherein another new definition of the word ahimsá was propagated. According to this definition, hiṁsá meant to cause pain to living beings, but did not include the slaughter of animals for food. This idea is very much mistaken. If causing pain amounts to hiṁsá, the slaughter of animals for food must also be called hiṁsá, because the animals do not offer their heads willingly at the altar of death for this cause.

Recently one more interpretation for this word has been heard. It somewhat resembles the second definition described earlier, but it even lacks the simplicity or sincerity of that interpretation. According to this interpretation, ahimsá means non-violence or non-application of force. Possibly it is this interpretation which has distorted most the meaning of ahimsá. In all actions of life, whether small or big, the unit mind progresses by surmounting the opposing forces. Life evolves through the medium of force. If this force is not properly developed, life becomes absolutely dull. No wise person would advocate such a thing, because this would be contrary to the very fundamentals of human nature.

The champions of non-violence (so-called ahimsá) have, therefore, to adopt hypocrisy and falsehood whenever they seek to use this so-called ahimsá for their purposes. If the people of one country conquer another country by brute force, the people of the defeated nation must use force to regain their freedom. Such a use of force may be crude or subtle and as a result, both the body and mind of the conquerors may be hurt. When there is any application of force, it cannot be called non-violence. Is it not violence if you hurt a person not by your hands but by some other indirect means? Is the boycott movement against a particular nation not violence? Therefore I say that those who interpret non-violence and ahimsá to be synonymous have to repeatedly resort to hypocrisy to justify their actions. The army or police are necessary for administration of a country. If these organizations do not use force even in case

of necessity, their existence will be of no meaning. The mark of so-called ahimsá or non-violence on a bullet does not make the bullet non-violent.

Those who are not adequately equipped to oppose an evil-doer should make every endeavour to gain power and then make the proper use of this power. In the absence of ability to resist evil, and in the absence of even an effort to acquire such ability, declaring oneself to be non-violent in order to hide one's weaknesses before the opponent may serve a political end, but it will not protect the sanctity of righteousness.

The meaning of the word ahimsá in the sphere of Sádhaná has already been explained. According to its correct meaning, one will have to guide one's conduct carefully to ensure that one's thought or actions cause pain to nobody and are unjust to none. Any thought or action with the intention of causing harm to someone else amounts to himsá. The existence of life implies destruction of certain lower forms, no matter whether there is intention of doing harm or not. The process of respiration kills thousands of millions of protoplasmic cells. Whether one knows it or not, in every action such living cells are dying and being destroyed. The use of prophylactics means destructions of millions of disease-carrying germs. The crop-eating insects, parasites, mosquitoes, bugs, spiders, etc. are also being killed in innumerable ways. This is necessary to maintain one's livelihood; it is not with the intention of causing pain to them. Such acts also, therefore, cannot be classed as himsá; they are to be done for self-defense.

As a result of clash and cohesion within the physical structure of every entity and also for the maintenance of structural solidarity at every moment, a process of formation and deformation is always taking place. Rice is obtained from paddy – is there no life in paddy? Paddy can sprout. It is also capable of reproduction. For the preservation of the physical body you prepare rice by killing the paddy. Do you have any intention to harm anybody while preparing rice? It is thus seen that life depends on other forms of life for its very existence. There is no question of himsá or ahimsá here. If this is conceived as himsá living beings will have to subsist on bricks, sand and stone. Even breathing will have to be stopped or one will have to commit suicide.

It is, however, very necessary to remember two things in respect of edibles. First, as far as possible, articles of food must be selected from among those items in which development of consciousness is comparatively little; i.e., if vegetables are available, animals should not be slaughtered. Secondly, under all circumstances before killing any animal having developed or under-developed consciousness, it must be considered whether it is possible to live in a healthy body without taking such lives.

The human body is constituted of innumerable living cells. These cells develop and grow with the help of similar living entities. The nature of your living cells will be formed in accordance with the type of food you take. Ultimately all these together will affect your mind to some extent. If the cells of the human body grow on rotten and bad-smelling food, or on the fresh flesh of animals in which mean tendencies predominate, it is but natural that the mind will have a tendency of meanness. The policy of eating, without due consideration, whatever is available cannot be supported in any case, even though there may not be any question of himsá or ahimsá. It should not be your policy to do what you wish.

You must perform actions after due thought. For continued subsistence a policy will have to be adopted for taking food; otherwise it will be against the code of aparigraha. What aparigraha means will be explained later.

Himsá and the use of force are not identical. Sometimes the use of force may result in himsá, even though there is no thought in the mind to cause pain. When the pressure of circumstances compels the use of force against certain individuals resulting in himsá, such individuals are termed as átatáyii in Saṁskṛta.

Kṣetradárápahárii ca shastradhárii dhanápaháh
Agnidagaradashcaeva śad'ete hyátatáyinah

“Anyone who, by the use of brute force, wants to take possession of your property, abducts your wife, comes with a weapon to murder you, wants to snatch away your wealth, sets fire to your house or wants to take life by administering poison, is called an átatáyii.” If any person or a nation wants to occupy all or part of another country, the use of physical force against such invading forces is not against the principle of ahimsá. Rather, by a wrong interpretation of the term ahimsá or by interpreting himsá and brute force as identical, common people will have to suffer from loss of wealth, happiness, or other hardships.

Sometimes it so happens that people instead of convincing superstitious people, injure their sentiments by their behaviour. A perusal of history shows that the antagonists of idolatry have, on many occasions, destroyed beautiful temples which were unique examples of architecture. They destroyed the beautiful images which represented the expressions of sculptural art. All these acts are extremely violent, because they cause severe pain to the idolaters, and consequently the idol-worshippers adopt an obstinate attitude towards idols even though they are fully convinced that idol-worship is futile. As a result, not only is the spiritual progress of the idol-worshippers hampered, but the progress of the whole human society is retarded. It is worth noting that even if in any country all the people without exception give up idolatry, the spiritual aspirants, who follow the principles of Brahmacharya, will preserve images carefully in museums out of appreciation for sculpture and aesthetic taste. They will not destroy these beautiful works in any circumstances. Destroying a work of art also results in the destruction of the sense of subtle appreciation, and this is in no way proper.

While the mind is still attached to religious or sectarian signs or submits to superstitious rituals, it remains engrossed in crude objects. Any crude method to prevent such sectarian superstitions will cause reactions in the mind and this will hamper Sádhaná. The best course, therefore, is to help these persons to expand their minds by means of Brahma bhávaná – cosmic ideation – and only in that case will they be able to give up superstitions easily.

The principle of ahimsá, one of the aspects of Brahma Sádhaná, must have been clearly understood now. Let us now consider whether parents punishing a child amounts to himsá or ahimsá. No, it is not

hiṁśá because there is no intention of causing harm or pain at all. The purpose of such punishment is not to make the child shed tears, the purpose of such action is only correction. Whether it is a thief or a robber or a gentleman or a friend or anybody else, any action with a true spirit of rectification cannot be termed as hiṁśá, no matter how harsh it may seem.

It must now be clear that in day-to-day life it is not at all difficult to follow the path of true ahiṁśá. Taking meat as food is harmful in hot countries, especially where vegetables are available in abundance. However, under medical advice, as a diet after recovery from illness or as one of the constituents of medicine, eating meat cannot be called either hiṁśá or greed, because the meat is eaten under those circumstances only to maintain life. In extremely cold countries people eat animal flesh, wear animal skins and burn animal fat under the pressure of necessity.

Heroism is revealed in fight against aggressors. Consider the Rámáyāña, the great epic. It describes Shrii Ráma waging a war with all his might against Rávaña, who abducted his wife. Shrii Ráma's action was in no way against the principle of ahiṁśá, because he did not invade Lanká with any desire to conquer the territory or to cause harm.

Consider the Mahábhárata. Mahápuruśa Shrii Krśṇa had insisted to the Pandavas to take up arms against the Kaoravas, because the Kaoravas were aggressors (átatáyii) who had taken possession of the land by force. No one would accuse the very incarnation of love, Shriiman Maháprabhu, one of the great revolutionists in the social and spiritual world, of adopting ways associated with hiṁśá; but he too pounced like a lion on the tyrant Kázii. If hiṁśá and use of force were synonymous, Maháprabhu, the incarnation of mercy, certainly would not have done so.

The use of force against an aggressor is valour and desisting from such use of force is cowardice. But the weak people must assess their strength before indulging in violent conflict with a powerful aggressor; otherwise, if a fight is started without acquiring proper strength injustice may temporarily triumph. In history such an error has been called "Rajput folly". The Rajputs always went forward with courage to resist Mughal invasion. No doubt, they fought valiantly, but they faced the enemy without assessing their own strength. They suffered from intrigues and internal dissensions and hence they always lost battles and died a heroic death. It is, therefore necessary to acquire adequate strength before declaring a war against an aggressor. To pardon aggressors before correcting their nature means encouraging injustice. Of course, if you find that the aggressor is bent on destroying you, whether you use force or not, it would be proper to die at least giving a blow to the best of your might without waiting to assemble the adequate forces.

SATYA

Parahitártham váuṇmanoso yathárthatvam satyam.

Satya implies proper action of mind and the right use of words with the spirit of welfare. It has no English synonym. The word “true” or “truth” would be translated in Saṁskṛta as “rta” (to state the fact). The Sādhaka is not asked to follow the path of rta. One is to practise Satya. The practical side of Satya is dependent on relativity, but its finality lies in Parama Brahma, the Supreme Spiritual Entity. That is why Brahma is often referred to as the “essence of Satya.”

Satyaṁ jñānāmanantaṁ Brahma.

Even though the objective of a Sādhaka is to achieve that ultimate entity, in the process Sādhakas have to deal with the relativity of their surroundings. Humans are rational beings: they possess in varying degrees the capability to do what is necessary or good for humanity. In the realm of spirituality such thought, word or action has been defined as Satya.

For example, a person rushes to you for shelter. You do not know whether he is guilty or not, or perhaps you know for certain that he is not guilty. He is followed by a ruffian bent on torturing him. If this terrified man seeks refuge in your house, and then the ruffian comes and asks you regarding his whereabouts, what should you do? By adhering to rta or truth you would inform the ruffian of his whereabouts. Then if he is murdered, will you not be responsible for this murder? Your mistake may have resulted in the murder of an innocent person. By adhering to rta or truth you become indirectly guilty of this heinous crime. What would be your duty if you followed the correct interpretation of Satya? It would be not to reveal the whereabouts of the person and rather to misguide the aggressor so that the refugee may safely return home.

Suppose your mother is taking food. A letter is received about the death of your maternal grandfather. If mother enquires about the contents of the letter, what reply will you give? If you adhere to “truth”, you will reveal the news of her father’s death, which will cause a great shock to her mind and she would not even be able to take her food. It would be preferable in this case to state that all is well in their family. After your mother has had her food, a mention of her father’s illness would prepare the ground for her to bear the news of the tragedy. In this way, even though something other than truth was uttered, the dignity of Satya has been maintained.

ASTEYA

Paradravyāpaharaṇatyāgo’steyam.

Not to take possession what belongs to others is asteya. It means non-stealing. Stealing may be of four types:

1. Physical theft of any material object. Ordinarily those persons who steal material objects are called thieves. But thieves are not only those persons who flee with stolen objects after committing armed robbery. Whatever is taken in possession by the use of brute physical force, of arms or of strength of intellect, whether it is money or goods, amounts to theft, because behind such actions there is the intention of taking others' property deceitfully. However, acceptance of anything like money, crops, gold, etc., in exchange for money in a proper way is not theft.

2. Psychic theft. Here you did not take material possession of anything, but you planned it in your mind. This also called theft, because you have mentally stolen. Only the fear of law or of adverse criticism prevented you from doing the action physically.

3. Depriving others of their due physically. Even if you do not take possession of what belongs to others, but you deprive others of what is their due, you become responsible for their loss. This is also stealing.

4. Depriving others of their due mentally. If you do not actually deprive anybody of what is justifiably their due, but you plan in your mind to do so, that too amounts to theft.

Some explanation here is necessary regarding the third and fourth types of theft referred to above. You may have seen that many educated people travel by train without purchasing proper tickets. They do not directly steal money from the Railway administration, but they deprive the railway administration of its due. A little thought will reveal that there is a sort of barter relationship of the passengers and the railway administration and therefore ticketless travel amounts to theft of the type referred to under 3 and 4 above. Those who travel by train have obtained the facility from the railway administration. By purchasing tickets they pay for that facility in full and consequently the railway administration cannot be held in high esteem for rendering a social service. When the railway is not rendering free services, not to pay one's travelling fare is theft.

Consider for a moment: what type of person commits such a theft for a few rupees only! Often people of the type indulge in all types of tall talks, freely criticize the leaders, and accuse them of corruption and nepotism. If their shortcoming is pointed out, they plead "It is difficult to live in the world with such strict morality. Those who run the railway administration in such a manner deserve it – this type of theft is justified." Missionaries or ascetics who convey a divine message, or political leaders with the noble purpose of doing good to the country, are seen to be often indulging in ticketless travel. This is a daily occurrence. Bribing government employees to evade income and other taxes, or demanding travelling allowance for a higher class when they actually travel in a lower class, these are all nothing but cheating. It is not only theft, it is also pettiness.

All these tendencies to steal are contradictory to the code of asteya. In many cases even educated people often act knowingly against the principle of asteya or do not want to accept that petty stealing violates it. The author was once questioned by an acquaintance who was a Railway employee as to why

he had purchased a full ticket for a nephew aged thirteen years, when a half ticket might have done (half tickets being permitted up to the age of twelve only).

There are some moralists who do not want to cheat any particular individual, but do not consider anything wrong in cheating the well-to-do or the government. Many a shopkeeper would sell adulterated commodities to his customers but entertain his own friends and guests with genuine items. It should be remembered that all actions with such a psychological background are against asteya. The easiest way of practising asteya, as in the case of all other principles of Yama and Niyama, is auto-suggestion. If people, right from the childhood, remember these codes and remind themselves what is correct, they will not go astray when they grow up – even in the midst of temptations – and they will be able to maintain the high standard of thoughts and character.

BRAHMACARYA

The correct meaning of Brahmacharya is “to remain attached to Brahma”. “Brahmañi vicarañam iti Brahmacharyam”. Whenever people do some work or think of doing any work extroversially, they look upon the object, with which they come in contact, as a crude finite entity. Because of their constant aspiration for material achievement their mind is so engrossed in material objects that their very consciousness becomes crude. The meaning of practising Brahmacharya Sádhaná is to treat the object with which one comes in contact as different expressions of Brahma and not as crude forms. By means of such an ideation, even though the mind wanders from one object to another, it does not get detached from Brahma because of the Cosmic feeling taken for each and every object. As a result of this Preya Sádhaná (extroversial approach) is converted into Shreya Sádhaná (introversial approach) and Káma into Prema. ([Preya means attraction towards crude material objects, while] Shreya means attraction towards the ultimate reality. Káma means desire for finite objects and Prema means desire for the Infinite).

Many misinterpret Brahmacharya to mean preservation of semen. It should be remembered that neither the word Brahma nor the word carya has any relevance to the word “semen”. Moreover, even physiologically such a preservation of semen is a bluff. Either owing to the disease in certain glands or by the use of similar other processes, unless one becomes maimed, it is not possible to observe such Brahmacharya. It is certainly true that if the correct meaning of the word Brahmacharya is accepted (that is, to feel the Cosmic Entity in every material object), control in life becomes essential, but such control does not imply disobeying the laws of nature. Control means to abide by nature’s laws.

The prevention of the discharge of semen by some special measures or prevention of its surplus formation by fasting is ordinarily termed as so-called Brahmacharya. For those who are not married, this so-called Brahmacharya (which is really not Brahmacharya) has some meaning, because it reduces the possibility of sexual excitement and thus prevents a discharge which may occur due to excitement while awake, asleep or dreaming. This is because when there is no formation of surplus semen, there is no physical desire to waste it. Further consideration will, however, show what this so-called Brahmacharya is worth. Are the prevention of formation of surplus semen and the loss of surplus semen

not one and the same thing? All that can be said is that the first alternative is good for the unmarried and the second for the married.

People who by different suppressive methods seek to prevent the discharge of semen, create a bad reaction on their body and mind. Their bodies become rough and lack in lustre. A suppression of the sexual desire results in other desires, especially anger, taking a more terrible form. In the olden times only the actual meaning of Brahmacharya was accepted. Later, when society was dominated by the intelligentsia, the so-called monks, who had taken to complete exploitation, thought that if ordinary citizens were allowed to pursue spiritual practices, they might lose the machinery of exploitation at any moment, of which they were so fond. If common people are inspired by spiritual ideals their rationality will grow and grow. The monks realized therefore that the people will have to be kept maimed and helpless. Fear and inferiority complex will have to be infused in people to exploit them. They found that such an exploited mass consisted of ordinary worldly people, most of whom were married. If, therefore, the loss of semen was anyhow declared as anti-religious, they would be able to gain their end without difficulty.

And the result was promptly achieved. Ordinary worldly people began to think that they, by leading a married life, had committed a serious wrong, a heinous sin: they had indulged in activities against Brahmacharya. The monks observed celibacy and were, therefore, far superior. The so-called recluses took advantage of the situation and have, without difficulty, been exploiting the society.

Whether these recluses in fact are naesthika Brahmachariis (those who do not waste semen at all) cannot be decided by arguments. This can be decided by medical test. But it can be said without doubts that many of the so-called monks will not pass this test.

Marriage is a natural function like bath, food, sleep, etc. Therefore, there is nothing to be condemned in it, nor does it go against dharma. When a great man or an elevated sadhaka is not prohibited from taking food, etc., there is no reason why he or she should be debarred from marriage. But proper control is no doubt greatly needed, not only over food and sleep, but in every walk of life. The lack of such control causes disease. Food is essential for life, but absence of control over eating causes indigestion. A bath is refreshing, but in absence of control over bath, i.e., a long-continued bath, would make one catch cold. Similarly, marriage has its function but the absence of restraint in married life would cause various diseases in body and mind.

Marriage is slightly different from other natural functions in life, such as eating, sleeping, etc. Marriage is not so essential for life as are food and sleep.

The need for marriage differs with individuals. That is why every individual should have complete freedom in matters of marriage. For example, marriage of those persons who suffer from some physical or mental disease, or who are not financially well off, or whose present circumstances are not favourable for marriage (i.e., where marriage can cause unhappiness), is not desirable. Those who are

constantly engaged in the fulfilment of an ideal, or those who have to spend the greater part of their day in earning their livelihood or some mental occupations, should not marry, because they will not find it possible to fulfil their family commitments properly. The marriages of such people are harmful to the society in many cases. Although marriage is not desirable for those who are suffering from some disease or whose circumstances are not favourable to getting married, there remains a possibility of their indulging in vices stealthily if they are not married. To avoid this, they should work for the attainment of some high ideals or do rigorous spiritual practices. The psychological degeneration which is inherent in the suppression of psychic tendencies can be avoided only by an effort to fulfil a lofty ideal.

It has been said earlier, and it is being repeated, that one has to exercise control in every sphere of life, whether big or small. Such control does not imply killing the desire but controlling it. Desires and tendencies are natural attributes of a living being. Therefore, those who want to kill the desires should better adopt some easy method of committing suicide instead of pursuing any difficult method of spiritual practices. I do not find any reason to support the so-called Brahmacharya for those who are Shaeva, Shákta, Vaeśnáva, or who believe in Puráńas, because their deities, Shiva, Viśńu, Krśńa and others, were what is commonly known as worldly people. In the Puráńa the names of their wives and children are also mentioned.

Dharma is based on Satya, “Dharmah sah na yatra na satyamasti.” “Where there is no satya there is no dharma.” This peculiar interpretation of Brahmacharya may contain anything and everything save except satya. Hence there is no dharma or Brahma in it.

Humanity has to progress towards the ultimate reality by accepting what is truth. That is the path of a sádha; that is the path of dharma. It may be a privilege to parasitic religious professionals to deny what is simple truth in practical life, but thereby the sanctity of dharma cannot be maintained. It is not the path of satya, it is nothing but hypocrisy.

APARIGRAHA

In case of enjoyment of any material object, the control over the subjectivity is called Brahmacharya while the control over objectivity is aparigraha.

“Deharksátiriktabhogasáadhanásviikaro’parigraha.” Non-indulgence in the enjoyment of such amenities and comforts of life as are superfluous for the preservation of life is aparigraha. For our existence we require food, clothes, and also a house to live in. Provision for old age and money and cultivable land for one’s dependents are also essential. Therefore, a number of factors have to be taken into consideration to determine an individual’s necessity for the preservation of life. It may be that the requirements of any two persons are not similar. It is therefore, difficult to determine the minimum requirements for any particular person, because it is entirely a relative factor. The minimum requirement of a person can, to some extent, be determined and decided by the society.

For example, no one shall accumulate more than a certain amount of money or no one shall possess more than a certain number of houses or no one shall be owner of more than a certain area of landed property. But it is not possible for the society to fix the minimum limit in all spheres. Even after setting a limit for land, property etc., it is not possible to fix a quota in respect of edibles. The voracious may overeat and be attacked with diseases, the seekers of luxury may overspend on their luxuries and incur debt. That is why it will be easier for an individual to be established in aparigraha, if the individual and the society work together cooperatively. Those items of personal requirement which are left to the discretion of the individual largely depend on the conception of that individual's happiness and comforts.

This also changes according to time, person and place. For example, one person may easily bear certain physical hardships, while another person under the same circumstances may possibly die. Under these circumstances the latter requires greater comforts of life than the former to remove his or her difficulty and this will not be against aparigraha. The place is to be considered also. In the summer season in India woollen clothing is unnecessary, but it is a necessity in Siberia during that time. Time should be considered also. The minimum necessity of an ordinary person today is not limited to the minimum necessity of an ordinary person in prehistoric age. The reason is that the objects of pleasure are more easily available today and will be available even more easily in the future. Therefore, while practising aparigraha, if the time factor is neglected, one will become unfit for social life and will have to withdraw from the physical world. Advocating the use of [raw sugar], i.e., guṛ, in the age of sugar, and bullock-cart in the age of railways, has no meaning in the practice of aparigraha. Today for an ordinary person whose time is not more valuable than that of another, travelling by aeroplane is definitely contrary to aparigraha, whereas travelling by rail is certainly not against aparigraha.

That is why I said that the society may help individuals to be established in aparigraha by setting a standard in certain spheres of life. But the complete establishment in aparigraha ultimately depends on the individual.

Aparigraha is an endless fight to reduce one's own objects of comforts out of sympathy for the common people, after ensuring that individuals are able to maintain solidarity in their physical, mental and spiritual lives for themselves and their families.

In practising aparigraha the objects of pleasure will increase or decrease with person, place and time; but the definition of aparigraha, as mentioned above, will be applicable to all persons, in all countries and at all times.